

Testimony before the Appropriations Committee

In Opposition to an Act Implementing the Governor's Proposed Budget Recommendations for
Mental Health and Addiction Services (DMHAS)

Denise M. Hart, Windsor Locks

February 23, 2017

Good evening Senators Osten and Formica, Representatives Walker, and members of the Appropriations Committee,

My name is Denise M. Hart and I am a registered voter in the town of Windsor Locks.

I am here to testify on **HB 7027, An Act Concerning the Governor's Budget Recommendations.**

I am opposed to the proposed cuts to the Department of Mental Health and Addiction Services that will virtually eliminate Regional Mental Health Boards and weaken necessary grant-funded Mental Health and Addiction programs like outpatient programs for people who are uninsured, case management, supported employment, and peer services.

I am a member of Second Wind Club House, Community Health Resources, I facilitate Hearing Voices Network Group in Enfield and I serve on the Board of North Central Regional Health Board, and other organizations as well.

As a member of these organizations, help is available in many ways, whether it be therapy, housing, medications, moral support, lunches and socialization. All of the programs help us to live a supported life and functioning to the best of our abilities. If these programs are eliminated, peers and clients will be self-medicating, on the streets, homeless, being victimized, hungry, lonely and when we can't take the way we are feeling and the circumstances we are in any longer, you will see the suicide rate go up. PLEASE do not take away our dignity, our pride and our sanity. Treat us with the love and respect that we deserve.

Governor Malloy, we stand before you as people, NOT numbers, not a budget cut, but as voters. Yes, mental health limitations do not keep us from voting!

The situations that we are in, we did not create ourselves; Most of us are victims of our childhood, abuse, incest, bad parenting, not being afforded opportunities, and mainly being diagnosed, most times after finishing school. Life threw a Whammy at us. Somehow, we found ways of functioning to the best of our abilities.

All of these circumstances could be your family, friends and possibly yourself.

Your consideration for eliminating The Mental Health Regional Health Board is without realizing that it has brought in \$23 million dollars in federal funds; we are not freeloaders.

Thank you for giving me the opportunity to represent both myself and others who are uncomfortable speaking or being in a crowd. I do not have that problem, as I am the youngest of eight kids and woke up in a crowd!